DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 435 975 CS 013 752

AUTHOR	Blaisdell, Pat; De Young, Jennifer; Hutchinson, Sandy; Pedersen, Susan
TITLE	Encouraging Recreational Reading in the Elementary Grades.
PUB DATE	1999-05-00
NOTE	61p.; Master's Action Research Project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight.
PUB TYPE	Dissertations/Theses (040) -- Tests/Questionnaires (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Action Research; Elementary Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; *Parent Participation; Program Descriptions; *Reading Aloud to Others; Reading Attitudes; Reading Habits; Reading Interests; *Recreational Reading; Student Attitudes; *Sustained Silent Reading

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program encouraging students to choose reading as a recreational activity. The targeted population consisted of first, second, third, and fourth grade students in a growing middle class community, near a large Midwestern city. The problem of students choosing recreational activities other than reading was documented through data collected from surveys given to students, parents, and teachers. Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students chose other recreational activities than reading. The influence of technology, the lack of positive role models, the lack of opportunity to read in the classroom, a narrow view of the value of reading, and the students' perceptions of themselves as readers negatively impacted the choice of reading as a recreational activity. A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of three major interventions: implementation of sustained silent reading, reading aloud to students in class, and parent involvement encouraging recreational reading. The data collected and analyzed at the conclusion of the action research project indicated that the students' attitudes towards recreational reading were positively impacted by the interventions. Students' choices on a survey of free-time activities showed a doubling of the number of students who chose reading as their first choice. The survey indicated a decrease in the number of students who chose playing video games and watching television as their first choice of activities. Data also indicated an increase in the average number of minutes spent in reading at home daily. (Contains 36 references and 7 figures of data. Appendixes contain survey instruments, data, permission letters, book logs, and "reading calendars" for each grade level.) (Author/RS)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

CS

ED 435 975

Encouraging Recreational Reading In the Elementary Grades

Pat Blaisdell
Jennifer De Young
Sandy Hutchinson
Susan Pedersen

An Action Research Project Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

Saint Xavier University
Field-Based Masters Program
Chicago, Illinois

May, 1999

CS 013 752

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
P. Blaisdell
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

This project was approved by

Linda J. Burke, Ed. D.
Facilitator

John B. Davis
Facilitator

Beverly Gulley, Ph.D
Dean, School of Education

ABSTRACT

This report describes a program encouraging students to choose reading as a recreational activity. The targeted population consisted of first, second, third, and fourth grade students in a growing middle class community, near a large Midwestern city. The problem of students choosing recreational activities other than reading was documented through data collected from surveys given to students, parents, and teachers.

Analysis of probable cause data revealed that students chose other recreational activities than reading. The influence of technology, the lack of positive role models, the lack of opportunity to read in the classroom, a narrow view of the value of reading, and the students' perceptions of themselves as readers negatively impacted the choice of reading as a recreational activity.

A review of solution strategies suggested by knowledgeable others, combined with an analysis of the problem setting, resulted in the selection of three major interventions: implementation of sustained silent reading, reading aloud to students in class, and parent involvement encouraging recreational reading.

The data collected and analyzed at the conclusion of the action research project indicated that the students' attitudes towards recreational reading were positively impacted by the interventions. Students' choices on a survey of free-time activities showed a doubling of the number of students who chose reading as their first choice. The survey indicated a decrease in the number of students who chose playing video games and watching television as their first choice of activities. Data also indicated an increase in the average number of minutes spent in reading at home daily.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1 - PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTENT 1

General Statement of the Problem 1

Local Setting 1

Community Setting 3

National Context 4

CHAPTER 2 - PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION 7

Problem Evidence 7

Probable Causes 10

CHAPTER 3 - THE SOLUTION STRATEGY 14

Literature Review 14

Project Objectives 16

Action Plan 16

CHAPTER 4 - PROJECT RESULTS 20

Historical Description of Intervention 20

Presentation and Analysis of Results 23

Conclusions and Recommendations 26

REFERENCES 28

APPENDICES....31
Appendix A - Elementary Reading Attitude Survey....31
Appendix B - Elementary Teacher Survey....36
Appendix C - Reading Reflection....37
Appendix D - Free-Time Activity Choices....38
Appendix E - Home Reading Survey....39
Appendix F - Collective Elementary Reading Attitude Survey Response....41
Appendix G - Parent Permission Letter....42
Appendix H - First Grade Book Log....43
Appendix I - Second Grade Book Log....44
Appendix J - Reading At Home Parent Packet....45
Appendix K - First Grade Reading Calendar....50
Appendix L - Second Grade Reading Calendar....51
Appendix M - Third Grade Reading Calendar Letter....53
Appendix N - Fourth Grade Reading Calendar....54

CHAPTER 1

PROBLEM STATEMENT AND CONTEXT

Problem Statement

Elementary students in first, second, third, and fourth grades fail to choose reading as a free time activity both at school and at home. Evidence for the existence of the problem includes teacher and parent observation, student self-report, and assessments that indicate declining achievement in student reading.

Local Setting

This study was conducted at two elementary sites in a K-8 district in a suburban area near a large Midwestern city. Both sites are K-5 buildings with heterogeneously grouped, self-contained classrooms with inclusion of special education students for appropriate subjects. The only exception is that students are grouped by ability for math instruction. Both schools have accommodations for the gifted and talented; students requiring remedial reading; physical needs such as speech, occupational therapy, physical therapy; and emotional needs such as counseling, social work, and psychological services. Three 30 minute sessions of physical education, two 30 minute music classes, and one 40 minute art period are offered weekly at each site. Students also receive computer training in the Media Center once a week for a 40 minute period (Dannenberg, 1998).

Curriculum guides for each grade level provide objectives and exit goals. The district supplies teachers' manuals, student texts, and supplementary materials for each subject area. The goal is to build student skills by using a spiraling curriculum.

The faculty at both sites are 95% female, 5% male, and 100% Caucasian. The average teaching experience is 14.1 years. All teachers have Bachelor's Degrees, and 59.8% of the faculty have earned Master's Degrees or above. Administrators in this district earn an average of $79,032, while the average teacher's salary is $39,770.

Site A has a teacher/student ratio of one to twenty-eight, and the ratio at Site B is one to twenty-seven (School A Report Card, 1998).

Site A's student population consists of 872 students, 96.1% Caucasian, 0.5% African-American, 1.5% Hispanic, and 1.9% Asian/Pacific Islander. Free lunches are provided to 0.6% of the population. The attendance rate is 96.3%, with no chronic truancy, and 12.9% student mobility. Limited English proficiency students makes up 1.3% of the population (School A Report Card, 1998).

Site A was completed in 1987, with one addition completed in 1988. It includes the following classrooms: 4 kindergarten, 5 first grades, 6 second grades, 6 third grades, 6 fourth grades, and 6 fifth grades. The facility also includes spaces for art, music, physical education, a media center, and a commons area. Outdoor facilities include one asphalt playground, one baseball field, a track around the school, and an enclosed courtyard (Dannenberg, 1998).

The student population at Site B consists of 620 students, 93.9%Caucasian, 0.3% African-American, 4.0% Hispanic, 1.5% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.3% Native American. Free lunches are provided to 4.2% of the students at Site B. The attendance rate is 95.4%, with no chronic truancy and 5.5% student mobility. Students with limited English proficiency comprise 2.7% of the population (School B Report Card, 1998).

The facility at Site B was built in 1964 with three additions, the last of which was completed in 1994. The building includes the following classrooms: 4 early childhood, 3 kindergarten, 4 first grades, 4 second grades, 3 third grades, 4 fourth grades, 4 fifth grades, 1 multi-needs, 2 cross category classes, music, art, physical education, a media center, and a commons area. The outside grounds of this neighborhood school include two asphalt playgrounds, a baseball field, and an enclosed courtyard in the center of the building (Dannenberg, 1998).

Community Setting

The two communities which feed into the schools in this study border each other. They both have suburban, residential settings, and are located approximately 40 minutes outside of a major metropolitan area.

Community A covers an area of 13.8 square miles. The population of 45,371 is made up of 96% Caucasian, 1.7% African-American, 1.3% Asian, and 1.2% Hispanic. The median age of residents is 33 years. Education levels in this community are as follows: 34% high school graduate, 25% some college, 7% associate degree, 13% bachelor degree, and 4% graduate degree. The average household income is $42,756. The median home value is $139,611. This community has several large shopping areas, two train stations, a public library, and a post office (U.S. Census, 1990).

Community B covers an area of 1.1 square miles. The population of 6,038 is made up of 92% Caucasian, 3% African-American, 2% Asian, 5% Hispanic, and .2% Native American. The median age of residents is 28.5 years. Education levels in this community are as follows: 39 % high school graduate, 23 % some college, 7 % associate degree, 13 % bachelor degree, and 3 % graduate degree (U.S. Census, 1990). The average household income is $50,000. The median home value is $130,000 (Village Promotional Brochure, 1993). This community does not encompass many major thoroughfares, therefore business and industry are somewhat limited. Many residents from Community B rely heavily on the businesses and services of Community A. For example, they share the post office and public library.

The two schools represented in the study are part of the same school district, which is made up of five elementary Kindergarten through fifth grade buildings, and two junior high buildings, sixth through eighth grades. The district's student population is 4,758. There are 245 teachers employed, of which 40.2% have only bachelor

degrees, and 59.8% have graduate degrees. The district teacher / pupil ratio is 22.8 students per teacher (School A Report Card, 1998).

All of Community A and a large portion of Community B feed into the school district involved in this study. A major issue in both communities is that they are mainly residential and have very few businesses and no light industries to contribute to the district's tax base. Community A does have some areas which contain significant numbers of businesses and industries, but these are entirely located within the boundaries of a neighboring school district. There is nothing to alleviate the tax burden in the district in which the study took place. Because of this situation, the property taxes are high for the homes located within the targeted district.

Both communities are experiencing rapid growth in their housing markets, particularly in single-family homes with school age children. This growth has impacted the school district with large increases in student population over a short period of time. This growth has not only caused larger class sizes, but has also resulted in a need for more staff members at both schools. As the district has grown in student population, there has naturally been an increase in the number of students needing special services.

National Context

The problem of children choosing not to read in their free time is not a new development. Evidence of this problem has existed for many years, but the cumulative results and effects appear to have become more dramatic recently.

Several factors contribute to this decline in recreational reading. Children are bombarded with too many things to do in their free time. These options include passive activities such as watching television or movies and playing video games. Children are also offered a wide variety of organized sports and other after school activities which were not available at all, or not to the same large extent years ago.

Television seems to be the choice of a majority of children as the most popular free-time activity. This is due at least in part to the fact that television is so widely available. Because nearly every home has television(s), there has been a dramatic effect on today's children. "...it's amazing how we fail to appreciate the fact that children spend more time in front of the TV than in school. Of course there are cumulative effects!" (Healy, 1990, p. 198).

The children who were part of the first generation of television viewers are now parents themselves. As television has incorporated itself into their daily lives, it is likely they are reading less and not modeling recreational reading for their children. Many children come from homes where both parents are working full-time and the TV has become a modern day babysitter. " American youngsters, on average, now spend more hours in front of the set than any other activity except sleeping...Average viewing time for elementary students runs at about 25 hours a week, and for high schoolers, 28 hours a week, approximately six times the hours spent doing homework." (Healy, 1990, p. 196).

In any classroom, there will be students who are struggling to master reading. For these students, it is more understandable that reading is not viewed as a positive activity, but rather as one fraught with frustration. Of course, helping these students to achieve success in reading has always been a high priority of educators. The hope is that more successful reading experiences will foster enjoyment of reading, and therefore, the desire to read more and more. Educators are trying to prevent a cycle of frustration, lack of practice, lack of success, and more frustration.

A main concern of the teachers in this study is not the struggling reader, but rather those who can read, but choose not to. " The problem is not that our children don't learn how to read. They do. Educational research has indicated that most of our children do learn the basics of reading and math in the early grades. Many children,

however, do not keep on reading and wanting to learn more." (Rich, 1988, p.5). The problem the teachers are addressing in the project is that students who do not read are no better off than students who cannot read. If children possess reading skills, but choose not to practice those skills, their reading ability will not grow and develop to its full potential. Indeed, those skills may even deteriorate from lack of practice. "...they stated that television displaces leisure reading and thus inhibits the growth of reading skills, requires less mental effort than reading, and may shorten the time children are willing to spend on finding an answer to intellectual problems they are set to solve." (Healy, 1990, p. 198-199).

Most educators would agree that the key to a child's education begins with a strong foundation of reading skills. Children who can read and understand what they read will be able to achieve in all areas. Conversely, if a child's reading skills are not well developed, it has a negative impact on all subject areas. "Illinois reading scores statewide have dropped steadily in the last five years. That news, unwelcome as it is, should ring alarm bells for anyone concerned about the education of our young people." (Spagnola, 1997, p. 13). Declining reading scores are another indication that children are not practicing reading outside of the classroom. "Average reading achievement in grades 6, 8, and 10 declined steadily from 1993 to 1997. Grade 3 scores fluctuated, but the average score was lower in 1997 than in 1993 (Illinois State Board of Education, 1997). Reading is fundamental to insure the future success of our nation.

CHAPTER 2

PROBLEM DOCUMENTATION

Problem Evidence

Student, parent, and teacher surveys were administered during the first two weeks of school in order to document student attitude toward recreational reading. With the exception of the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (Appendix A), all survey instruments were developed by the researchers. Additionally, students were asked to write a reading reflection and rank five free time activity choices. Teacher anecdotal records were noted throughout the length of the research project. The 105 students in the targeted first, second, third, and fourth grade classes participated in these data collections. Forty-five elementary classroom teachers completed the Elementary Teacher Survey (Appendix B).

Students completed a Reading Reflection (Appendix C) to provide qualitative data. The Free-Time Activity Choices (Appendix D) had students rank 5 free-time activity choices which provided additional quantitative data.

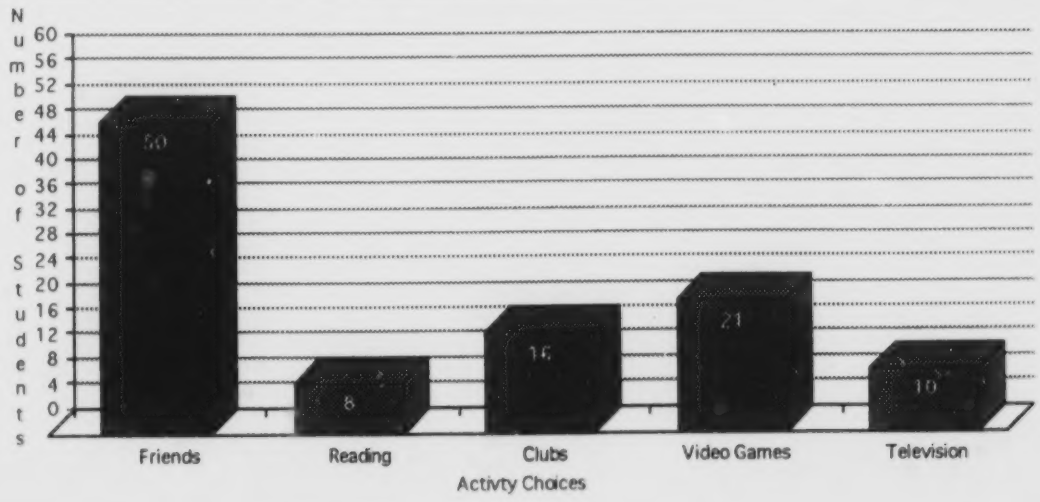


Figure 1: Most Popular Activity Choices

Although most students indicated in their Reading Reflections (Appendix C) that they like to read for fun, their Free-Time Activity Choice (Appendix D) rankings did not support this (Figure 1). Of the 105 students surveyed in the targeted classes, 50 chose playing with friends as their first free time activity choice, 8 chose reading, 16 chose clubs, 21 chose video games, and 10 chose television. The researchers noted that in each of the targeted classrooms, playing with friends was the top choice while reading was the least popular choice. These results indicate that most children do not consider reading as a popular recreational activity.

Parents of the targeted students were surveyed during the second week of school. The Home Reading Survey (Appendix E) was designed to provide both quantitative and qualitative data. The purpose of the survey was to assess the home literacy climate.

	First Grade	Second Grade	Third Grade	Fourth Grade
Physical Exercise	127	75	68	88
Watching T.V.	95	86	80	59
Organized Activity	33	33	30	45
Reading	22	23	27	34
Video Games	21	22	24	14

Figure 2: Average Minutes Per Day Of Home Activities By Grade Level

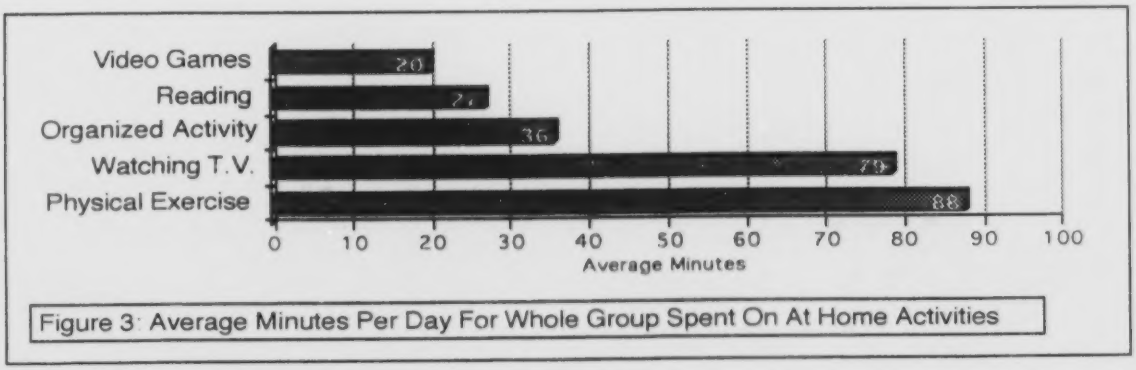


Figure 3: Average Minutes Per Day For Whole Group Spent On At Home Activities

Tabulations of problem evidence were compiled for each class and the group as a whole. In the individual classes, reading ranked second to last in average minutes spent per day (Figure 2). The only activity that ranked lower than reading was video games. Two grade levels spent the most free time at physical exercise while the remaining classes spent the most time watching T.V. Whole group averages of time spent showed that physical activity and watching T.V. ranked first and second while reading continued in second to last place (Figure 3). Researchers noted that the amount of time spent reading increased from first grade to fourth grade. Contributing factors for this increase could include increased reading skills, lengthened attention span, and the amount of home reading required by the teacher.

The Elementary Teacher Survey (Appendix B) which was given to the classroom teachers in the targeted schools during the second week of classes. This survey assessed the classroom literacy climate and provided both quantitative and qualitative data.

	4 to 5 Times a Week	3 Times a Week	Less Than 3 Times a Week
I read aloud to my class.	39 (87%)	6 (13%)	0 (0%)
I provide SSR time in my classroom.	35 (78%)	8 (18%)	2 (4%)
I read during SSR time.	14 (33%)	10 (23%)	19 (44%)
I require my students to read at home.	32 (76%)	6 (14%)	4 (10%)
I find time to read at home.	32 (73%)	5 (11%)	7 (16%)

	Yes	No
My classroom library contains at least 4 books per child.	36 (80%)	9 (20%)
My classroom is equipped with a reading corner.	36 (80%)	9 (20%)

Figure 4: Elementary Teacher Survey Results

Results of the teacher survey (Figure 4) indicated that 87% of the teachers read aloud to their classes at least 4-5 times per week. While 78% provided SSR time in the classroom 4-5 times weekly, only 33% modeled SSR correctly by reading along with their students. Considering the emphasis placed on reading at the district level, it would be expected that 100% of the classroom libraries would contain at least four books per child. However, survey results indicated that 20% of classrooms do not have an adequate supply of student reading materials.

Probable Causes

Literature Based

The literature suggests several underlying causes for a lack of interest in reading as a recreational activity. Entertainment competition from modern technology, a lack of opportunity in the classroom to develop an interest in recreational reading, and a lack of positive role models are among the probable causes. In addition, students have a narrow view of the value of reading and the student's self-perception affects his/her attitude toward recreational reading.

According to The Report of the Commission on Reading (Anderson, Hiegert, Scott,&Wilkinson, 1985), many children do not read much on their own time. Modern technology, including television, computers, and video games, is widely available and seems to be the more popular free time choice. For many children, reading does not appear to be an exciting free time activity, and lacks the instant gratification of modern technology. Schwartz (1995) states that 90% of fifth graders spend less than 1% of their free-time reading, but they spend 33% of their free-time watching television. "The attraction of electronic entertainment is undoubtedly one reason for the low level of voluntary reading among the young" (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986, p. 332). The television in the home serves many purposes: background noise, babysitter, passive entertainment, and so forth. It has become so much a part of our daily lives that we

have unwittingly allowed it to take the place of more productive activities. In many homes, television is on continuously. Viewing seems to be indiscriminate. The cumulative effect is reported by Lehr (1997) stating that the average child entering first grade has spent nearly 5,000 hours watching television, and at age 18, that child will have spent more time watching television than attending school (Finn, 1980).

Research indicates that a lack of opportunity in the classroom negatively impacts the development of an interest in recreational reading. Teachers are restricted by curriculum demands and schedules. Trelease (1997) reports that at the elementary level, only 6% of class time is dedicated to reading (Goodlad, 1984). "When compared with reading skills, such as comprehension and word recognition, voluntary reading was regarded as important, but far lower in priority. Teachers felt they had little or no time to spend on the encouragement of recreational reading" (Morrow & Weinstein, 1986, p. 332).

Studies suggest that the population is able to read, but is not choosing to read. Students are not observing the adults in their lives choosing reading as a recreational activity. "A recent survey on book purchasing in the U.S. showed that 60% of American households did not buy even one book during a one year period between 1990 and 1991" (Fractor, et al., 1993). A growing number of students are alliterate, capable of reading, but choosing not to. Classroom teachers are sometimes reluctant to model recreational reading because of fear of the perception that they are not using their time to actively teach. Since many children are not seeing role models at home and teachers are not comfortable reading recreationally with their students, children are not being influenced by positive role models.

Teaching children to read has always been a top priority in education, but according to Fractor, et al., (1993) "It is equally important to help children learn to value reading so that they will read, both for enjoyment and information. Unfortunately, the

evidence suggests that too often we are not particularly successful in nurturing voluntary reading habits" (p. 476). Teachers encourage reading when it fits into the realm of their curriculum. Teachers tend to focus on reading for information and neglect the value of the other major purpose, reading for pleasure.

A student's perception of his/her ability as a reader directly influences whether he/she will choose reading as a recreational activity. A lack of reading proficiency hinders a student's motivation to read recreationally. "How an individual feels about herself or himself as a reader could clearly influence whether reading would be sought or avoided" (Henk & Melnick, 1995, p. 472).

Site Based

One hundred five students in the four targeted classrooms completed an Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (ERAS) (Appendix A) developed by Kear and McKenna, as cited in Johns (1994). A quantitative group survey, ERAS, measures student attitudes toward recreational and academic reading. The survey was administered to the targeted classrooms in a whole group setting. The teacher read the survey and the students responded by circling the appropriate cartoon character.

The ERAS (Appendix F) of each individual class indicated a preference for academic reading over recreational reading. This supports the contention that students have a narrow view of reading. The children appeared to not even consider reading as a recreational activity. The Home Survey results supported the findings that the children do not spend much of their free time reading.

According to survey results, competition from modern technology has also influenced children's free time activity choices (Appendix D). Watching television ranked either first or second in each class surveyed. Group results demonstrated that the average amount of time spent by students reading was 27 minutes daily, whereas 223 minutes daily were used for other recreational activities.

Teacher survey results indicated that students do have the opportunity to develop an interest in recreational reading in the classroom. However, a lack of positive role models during SSR could contribute to their disinterest in reading as a recreational activity.

The literature stated that many students do not choose reading as a recreational activity. Entertainment competition from modern technology, a lack of opportunity in the classroom to develop an interest in recreational reading, a lack of positive role models, and the students' narrow view of the value of reading all contribute to this problem. Site-based data collected by the researchers confirmed that these influences do have a negative impact on the students' selection of reading as a recreational activity. Time spent on other activities greatly outweighed the amount of time spent reading.

CHAPTER 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Literature Review

Encouraging students to become lifelong readers is an important educational goal. Students need the opportunity to practice and develop a love of reading. A review of literature suggests strategies for both educators and parents. Possible interventions include reading dialogue journals, involvement in book clubs, implementation of a sustained silent reading program, reading aloud to children, and parent involvement.

Reading Dialogue Journals

Reading dialogue journals are reflections and records kept by the students. These logs document books, authors, dates, and minutes of reading, as well as student's feelings about material. The teacher responds to the student's thoughts creating a written dialogue with the student. As students review these logs they can analyze their selections to help them choose other books by the same author or genre that they have already enjoyed. After the implementation of reading dialogue journals, more books were read than ever before. Wolf found "children in grade 2 recorded a mean of 102 books read for the entire year. Students in grade 3 recorded a mean of 82 books. The average student from grades 4-6 recorded 50 titles, or about one and three-quarter books per week. This number is at least 10 times the national average" (Wolf, 1998, p.63).

Book Clubs

Book clubs are social interactions pertaining to self-selected books. Class time is given to the students not only to read, but to discuss the stories. Students share the contents and their reflections on the books. This encourages sharing and entices the reader. It also improves the student's reading confidence. Social interaction gives

students an intrinsic purpose for reading and encourages them to become life long readers (Davis, 1994).

·SSR

Sustained Silent Reading (SSR) is a block of time built into the daily schedule where students and teachers read self selected material for pleasure. This reading time is not used for assessment purposes. In order to facilitate a successful SSR program, the classroom library must provide a large quantity and wide variety of reading materials. Fractor, et al., (1993) indicate the importance of a classroom library to encourage reading. Another benefit of SSR is positively influencing the students' attitudes toward reading. Students who participate in SSR develop a new perspective on reading - as a form of recreation. Since many adults who come home from work at night think they can only relax by watching television, there is a critical need for such lessons. Trelease found that " most children who are read to, who are given a taste of the magic called reading, eventually want to work the magic themselves. With the sounds and the desire already planted, they learn more easily and willingly, enjoy it more, and end up reading more. And the more they read, the better they get at it" (Trelease, 1995, p. 21).

Reading Aloud to Children

A teacher read aloud is a daily time set aside for the teacher to read to students. When selecting books to read aloud to the class, the teacher considers the interests and the listening levels of the students. Reading materials are chosen from a wide variety of genres. The teacher is not only modeling reading for the class but is also making reading a pleasurable experience. "Research now provides evidence of the direct relationship between reading aloud to children and reading performance, language development, and the development of reading interests" (McCormick, 1977, p.143).

Parental Involvement

Parental involvement includes modeling reading as a recreational activity, reading aloud to their children, and providing a print climate in the home for all family members. "Parents who can provide both an appropriate atmosphere and an opportunity for their children to read are more likely to encourage leisure reading than those who for economic or other circumstances cannot provide these conditions" (Greaney, 1986, p. 816).

Project Objectives and Processes

Objectives

As a result of implementing strategies to encourage recreational reading, during the period of September, 1998 to January, 1999, the targeted first, second, third, and fourth grade students will increase their motivation to read, as measured by student and parent surveys, as well as teachers anecdotal records and records of books read.

Process Statements

1. Materials that foster parent involvement will be developed.
2. A Sustained Silent Reading Program will be implemented.
3. Reading aloud to children will be incorporated into daily activities.

Action Plan

The researchers' purpose is to promote reading as a lifelong activity. The goal of the action plan is to raise awareness among students, parents, and teachers of the importance of SSR, reading aloud to children, and parental involvement to encourage this lifelong habit.

I. Pre-interventions - All conducted within the first two weeks of school

A. Introduction

1. open-house presentation of action research project to parents
2. parent permission letter (Appendix G)

B. Surveys

1. Home Reading Survey - completed by parents (Appendix E)
2. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey - completed by children (Appendix A)
3. Elementary Teacher Survey - completed by Site A and Site B staff members (Appendix B)

II. Interventions - Conducted from September through January

A. Sustained Silent Reading

1. planned into daily class schedule
    a) first grade = minimum 15 minutes a day
    b) second, third, and fourth grades = minimum 20 minutes a day
2. book logs
    a) individual books recorded daily (Appendices H & I)
    b) class total recorded monthly on classroom charts
3. reading materials
    a) student selected
    b) variety of materials (books, magazines, comic books)
    c) previously selected - SSR time not used for selection

B. Read Aloud to Students

1. planned into daily class schedule
2. minimum of 20 minutes daily
3. variety of genre selected by the teacher

a) Humor

(1) Wayside School is Falling Down by Louis Sachar

(2) Amelia Bedelia by Peggy Parish

(3) Thomas' Snowsuit by Robert Munsch

(4) Miss Nelson is Missing by Harry Allard

b) Fantasy

(1) The Phantom Tollbooth by Norton Juster

(2) The BFG by Roald Dahl

(3) Where the Wild Things Are by Maurice Sendak

(4) The Magic Schoolbus Series by Joanna Cole

c) Historical Fiction

(1) Johnny Appleseed by Stephen Kellogg

(2) Sign of the Beaver by Elizabeth Spear

(3) George Washington's Breakfast by Jean Fritz

(4) Sara, Plain and Tall by Paul MacLachlan

C. Parental Involvement

1. communication

a) shared information about importance of SSR and reading aloud (Appendix J)

b) class book log totals in newsletters (Appendix H & I)

2. reading calendars (Appendices K, L, M, & N)

a) distributed monthly

b) records at-home reading

c) can be independent or shared reading

3. guest readers - frequency based on number of parent volunteers

a) parents as positive role models

b) parents read to students

III. Post-interventions - Conducted at the conclusion of the second quarter

A. Repeat Surveys

1. Home Reading Survey (Appendix E)

2. Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix A)

B. Compile Data

1. comparison of survey results

2. teacher anecdotal journals

CHAPTER FOUR

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to motivate students to select reading as a free time activity both at school and at home. The pre-interventions of this program included making parents aware of the action research project, getting permission for student involvement (Appendix G), and conducting surveys to determine various attitudes toward reading (Appendices A, B, C, D, E) . The action research plan was implemented from September, 1998, until the end of the second quarter in January, 1999.

The teachers prepared for the action plan by preparing a climate in the classroom that was conducive to recreational reading. Each classroom contained a reading corner with comfortable and enticing seating. The teachers provided a carpeted area with bean bag chairs and pillows. Motivational reading posters were hung in the area. The displayed reading material was changed monthly to further entice the readers by offering new choices. The teachers insured that there was a minimum of four books per student which covered a variety of genre and reading levels. Other print materials such as magazines, newspapers, and comic books were also available.

The implementation of the action plan included three main interventions: sustained silent reading (SSR), reading aloud to students, and parental involvement. Sustained silent reading required the students and teachers to read silently for 15 to 20 minutes on a daily basis. The first and second grade teachers conducted SSR at the end of the school day, while the third and fourth grade teachers found that SSR was more effective when it followed the teacher reading aloud to the children. This became an important part of each teacher's daily routine. A crucial aspect of SSR was

that the material that the students read was self-selected, not teacher assigned. It also had to be selected prior to the start of SSR. Students tracked their reading accomplishments through the use of individual book logs and a class composite. The students in first, second, and third grades received a sticker on the class chart each time they completed a book log sheet (Appendices H & I) which represented reading ten books. Fourth grade students received a sticker for each book they completed because their books were lengthier and took more time to complete.

Another important aspect of the implementation was reading aloud to students. Again, this was planned into the daily schedule for a minimum of 20 minutes. The teachers selected a variety of genre at a listening level, which is higher than the students' reading level. Teachers displayed books that were read aloud in a prominent place, such as a chalkboard ledge, to make the book readily available and to encourage student perusal of the book.

The final implementation concerned parental involvement. The teachers communicated the purpose of the action plan at Open House during the first week of school. The teachers explained the importance of SSR and reading aloud to children. All parents were provided with a packet of tips for reading at home with their child (Appendix J). Although the original action plan called for including class book log totals in the weekly parent newsletters, the teachers decided it was repetitive and eliminated it. This was the only deviation from the original action plan.

Reading calendars (Appendices K, L, M, N) are records of student reading done at home. In first grade, the parents recorded the titles of books read at home weekly. The students placed their book lists on the monthly reading board. In second, third, and fourth grades, the calendars were distributed on the first day of the month. Each grade level set a daily reading goal and as the students completed the daily goal, the

parents signed the calendar as verification of the student's reading. The completed calendars were returned at the end of the month.

Each classroom had guest readers. The students invited parents and other visitors to share their love of reading by reading their personal favorites aloud to the class. The frequency of visits varied from weekly to monthly. The guests were also asked to share positive reading experiences from their lives.

At the conclusion of the study, the Home Reading Survey (Appendix E) and the Elementary Reading Attitude Survey (Appendix A) were taken again by parents and students. Data was collected and compared with initial survey results.

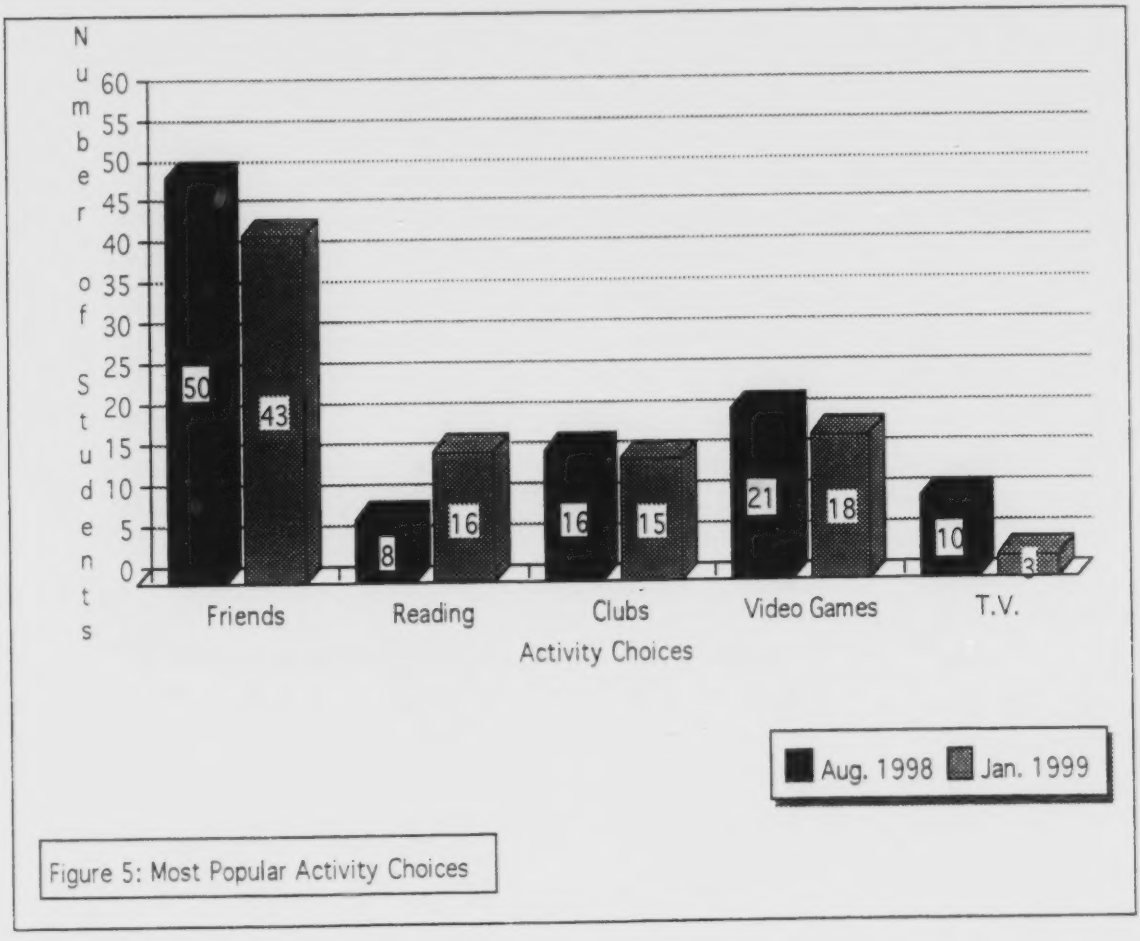


Figure 5: Most Popular Activity Choices

Presentation and Analysis of Results

The researchers compiled the data regarding free-time activity choices from September and January into a comparative graph (Figure 5). An analysis of the data in Figure 5 led the researchers to note that playing with friends continued to be the most popular free-time activity choice. The number of students who selected reading as their first choice doubled from eight to sixteen. No other activity showed as large a numerical change. Clubs and video games showed a slight decrease in popularity. Television viewing as a first choice showed a significant decrease from ten to three. The results indicated a positive change in some students' perceptions of reading as a recreational activity.

	First Grade		Second Grade		Third Grade		Fourth Grade	
	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999
Physical Exercise	127	50	75	47	68	44	88	54
Watching T.V.	95	73	86	77	80	46	59	69
Organized Activity	33	29	33	22	30	35	45	53
Reading	22	27	23	25	27	34	34	44
Video Games	21	14	22	23	24	21	14	21

Figure 6: Average Minutes Per Day Of Home Activities By Grade Level

The average amount of time spent engaged in physical exercise decreased from September to January in all grade levels. Watching television decreased in all grade levels except fourth. Students' participation in organized activities decreased for first and second grades and increased for third and fourth grade students. The average number of minutes spent in reading at home increased in all grade levels.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Second and third grade students' amount of time spent playing video games varied slightly. While first graders went down significantly, fourth graders showed a significant increase. There appeared to be no discernible pattern to time spent playing video games.

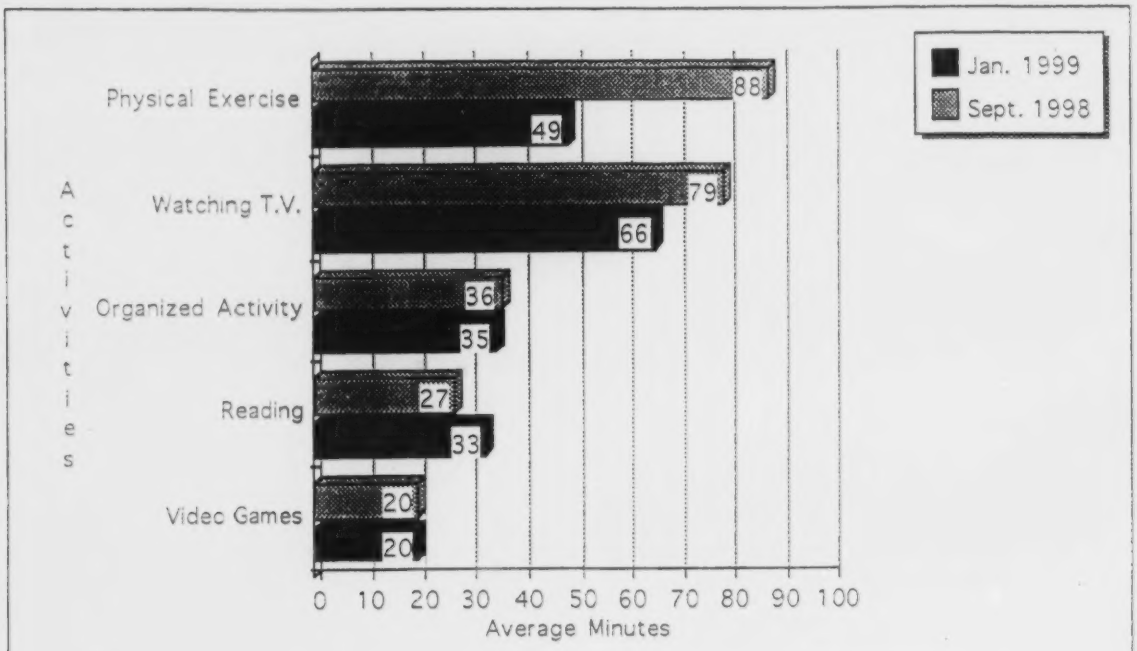


Figure 7: Average Minutes Per Day Of Whole Group Spent On At Home Activities

When examining data for the entire group (Figure 7), the researchers noted a significant decrease in physical exercise and watching television from September to January. Organized activities and video games showed little or no change. Reading, the targeted area of intervention, increased an average of six minutes per day per student. Reading was the only home activity which evidenced an increase in the amount of time spent per day.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

When the ERAS (Appendix F) was readministered, there was a general preference for recreational reading over academic reading. This is the opposite result from the September data. Some children appeared more inclined to consider reading as a recreational activity. Every question indicated a more positive response towards reading within the excited category, except for numbers seven and eight. Questions seven and eight asked how students felt about reading during vacation. Although one less student indicated an excited response, eight more students chose a happy response in January than in September. Question eight asked how the children felt about reading instead of playing. Seven fewer students chose an excited response, but there was an increase of 15 more students who chose a happy response in January than in September. In those categories, although the excited response declined, there was a considerable increase in the happy response. The only increase in the upset responses was question number two which asked the students how they felt when they read a book at school during free time. The upset response increased from six students in September to nine in January. However, the excited response increased from 42 students in September to 63 in January. All other upset responses showed a decrease.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The researchers at all four grade levels felt that the action research project produced successful results. The teachers involved in the project noted that some students, and their families, had never before considered reading to be a recreational activity. Prior to the study, the children spent a majority of their free time engaged in other activities. At the beginning of the project, five activity choices were given and reading was the least favorite. By January, after the implementation of the interventions had occurred, the results had changed. Reading had now doubled in popularity, and was only slightly less favored than video games, which was the second

most popular activity. Playing with friends was consistently the most popular free-time activity choice in both September and January. This outcome was anticipated by the researchers and did not come as a surprise.

The teachers involved in this action research project felt that encouraging recreational reading by students was an important and worthwhile goal. The actual interventions put into place achieved positive results at each grade level. The time allocated to the project became a favorite part of the day. The project never became a burden because the researchers witnessed the positive impact it was having on the children.

The enthusiasm of the students was observed in each participating classroom. The children looked forward to the teachers reading aloud each day, even bringing books from home to be read and recommending stories. Coming to the carpet for a story was a pleasurable and relaxing part of the day. As the teachers read aloud to the classes, they were modeling both the pleasure of reading and strategies to improve fluency, expression, and comprehension. Making predictions and reflecting on them helped the students to become actively engaged in enjoying and understanding the books. This was a natural preparation for their independent reading.

SSR became such a popular part of the day that the children were disappointed if institutes or assemblies interrupted their free reading time. For example, on an early release day, some students requested to reschedule SSR so that it would not be missed. In general, the students took responsibility and were prepared for SSR. They had preselected their own reading material so their reading time was not spent choosing a book. The children especially liked having the teachers sit among them while reading.

The parent involvement strategies in the project raised awareness of the need to encourage and model reading at home. The reading packet distributed at Open

House gave parents tips for engaging their children in reading. Some parents volunteered to be guest readers, some volunteered to work with individual students on their reading, and the targeted classes were particularly well represented at a school-wide family reading night. All students kept monthly reading calendars at home which required parent involvement. Positive feedback was received from several parents, not only through their comments, but also through their participation.

All of the researchers were pleased with the results of the project. They felt that even the most reluctant reader was positively influenced. They will continue these interventions as described in the project, not only for the remainder of this school year, but also in future years. They will also recommend them to other teachers. To quote the words of a first grade student, "Why would I want to watch T.V. when I can read a book?"

References

Allard, H. (1977). Miss Nelson is missing. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Anderson, R., Hiegert, E., Scott, J., & Wilkinson, I. (1985). Becoming a nation of readers: The report of the Commission on Reading. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education.

Cole, J. (1994). The magic school bus. New York: Scholastic.

Dahl, R. (1982). The BFG. New York: Puffin Books.

Dannenberg, H.(1998). Certified staff handbook. Section X, 1-20.

Davis, S. (1994). Making reading rewarding, not rewarded. Education Digest, 60, 63-65.

Finn, P. (1980). Developing critical television viewing skills, Educational Forum, 44, 473-482.

Fractor, J., Woodruff, M., Martinez, M., & Teale, W. (1993). Let's not miss opportunities to promote voluntary reading: Classroom libraries in the elementary school. The Reading Teacher, 46, 476-483.

Fritz, J. (1984). George Washington's breakfast, New York: Coward-McCann.

Goodlad, J. (1984). A place called school: prospects for the future. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Greany, V. (1986). Parental influences on reading. The Reading Teacher, 39, 813-818.

Healy, J. (1990). Endangered minds, New York: Simon & Schuster.

Henk, W., & Melnick, S. (1995) The reader self-perception scale (RSPS): A new tool for measuring how children feel about themselves as readers. The Reading Teacher, 48, 470-481.

Illinois State Board of Education (1997). Summary of student achievement in Illinois 1993-1997.

Johns, J., (1994). Improving reading: A handbook of strategies. Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company.

Juster, N. (1961). The phantom tollbooth. New York: Random House.

Kellogg, S. (1988). Johnny Appleseed. New York: Morrow.

Lehr, F. (1997, October 5). Television viewing and reading. [On-line]. ERIC Digest. Available at the address http://ericae.net/db/digs/ed272855.htm.

MacLachlan, P. (1985). Sarah, plain and tall. New York: Harper and Row.

McCormick, S. (1977). You should read aloud to your children. Language Arts, 54, 139-143.

Morrow, L.M., & Weinstein, C.S. (1986). Encouraging voluntary reading: The impact of a literature program on children's use of library centers. Reading Research Quarterly, 21, 330-346.

Munsch, R. (1985). Thomas' snowsuit. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Parish, P. (1963). Amelia Bedelia. New York: Harper and Row.

Rich, D. (1988). MegaSkills, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Sachar, L. (1989). Wayside school is falling down. New York: Lathrop.

School A Report Card (October, 1998).

School B Report Card (October, 1998).

Schwartz, D. (1995). Ready, set, read: Twenty minutes each day is all you need. Smithsonian, 25, 82-91.

Sendak, M. (1963). Where the wild things are. New York: Harper.

Spagnola, J.A. (1997, October 23). A love for reading is the best gift parents can give their children. The Star, A-13.

Speare, E. (1983). Sign of the beaver. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Trelease, J. (1995). The read aloud handbook. New York: Penguin.

Trelease, J. (1997). Reading more and loving it. Bellevue, WA: Bureau of Education and Research. (CLT-B10-8)

Village Promotional Brochure, Community A. (1993).

Wolf, J. (1998). Just read. Educational Leadership, 55, 61-63.

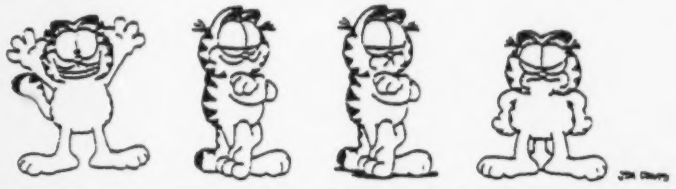
United States Census Bureau. (1990). Estimated resident population of targeted residential area 1990. (ISSN 1076.674x). Bath, OH: United States Census Bureau.

Appendix A

Elementary Reading Attitude Survey

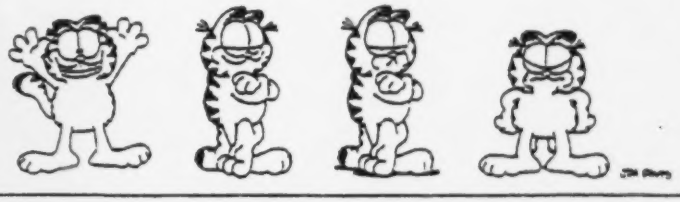
School _____ Grade _____ Name _____

1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy Saturday?

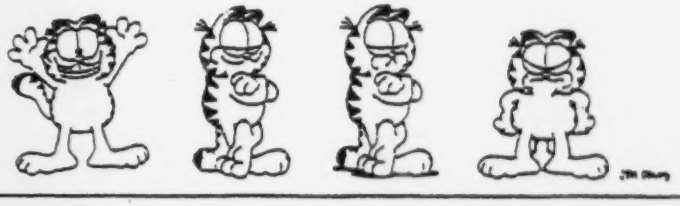


2. How do you feel when you read a book in a school during free time?

3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?



4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?

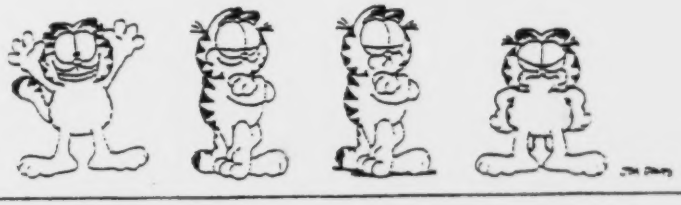


©Paws, Inc. The GARFIELD character is incorporated in this test with the permission of Paws, Incorporated, and may be reproduced only in connection with the reproduction of the test in its entirety for classroom use prior to December 31, 1999, and any other reproduction or use without the express prior written consent of Paws are prohibited.

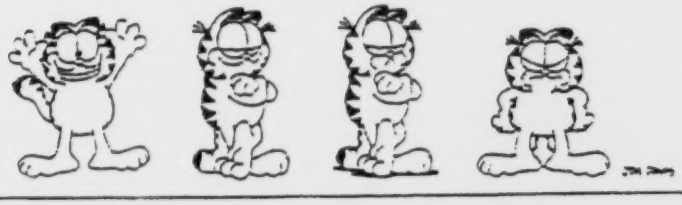
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?

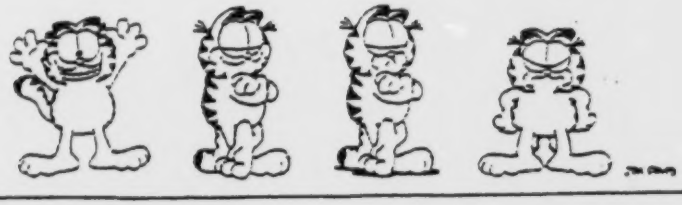
6. How do you feel about starting a new book?



7. How do you feel about reading during summer?



8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?

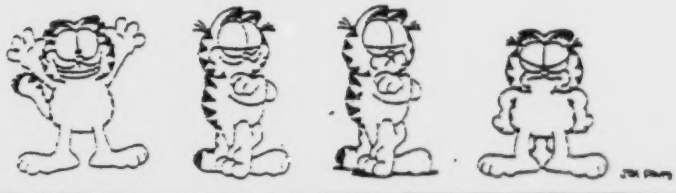


©Paws, Inc. The GARFIELD character is incorporated in this test with the permission of Paws, Incorporated, and may be reproduced only in connection with the reproduction of the test in its entirety for classroom use prior to December 31, 1999, and any other reproduction or use without the express prior written consent of Paws are prohibited.

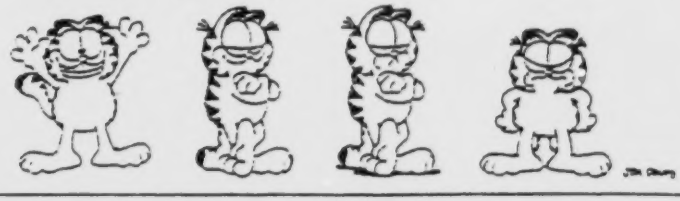
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?

10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?



11. How do you feel when the teacher asks you questions about what you read?



12. How do you feel about doing reading workbook pages and worksheets?

©Paws, Inc. The GARFIELD character is incorporated in this test with the permission of Paws, Incorporated, and may be reproduced only in connection with the reproduction of the test in its entirety for classroom use prior to December 31, 1998. Any other reproduction or use without the express prior written consent of Paws are prohibited.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

13. How do you feel about reading in school?

14. How do you feel about reading your school books?

15. How do you feel about learning from a book?

16. How do you feel when it's time for reading in class?

©Paws, Inc. The GARFIELD character is incorporated in this test with the permission of Paws, Incorporated, and may be reproduced only in connection with the reproduction of the test in its entirety for classroom use prior to December 31, 1999, and any other reproduction or use without the express prior written consent of Paws are prohibited.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

17. How do you feel about the stories you read in reading class?

18. How do you feel when you read out loud in class?

19. How do you feel about using a dictionary?

20. How do you feel about taking a reading test?

©Paws, Inc. The GARFIELD character is incorporated in this test with the permission of Paws, Incorporated, and may be reproduced only in connection with the reproduction of the test in its entirety for classroom use prior to December 31, 1999, and any other reproduction or use without the express prior written consent of Paws are prohibited.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix B

Elementary Teacher Survey

Check the appropriate boxes.	4 to 5 Times a Week	3 Times a Week	Less Than 3 Times a Week
I read aloud to my class.			
I provide SSR time in my classroom.			
I read during SSR time.			
I require my students to read at home.			
I find time to read at home.			

Check the appropriate boxes.	YES	NO
My classroom library contains at least 4 books per child.		
My classroom is equipped with a reading corner.		

In your professional opinion, do you feel that children engage in enough recreational reading? Why or why not?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix C

Name _____

Date _____

READING REFLECTION

1. Do you like to read for fun? YES NO

2. I like reading when _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. I don't like reading when _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

4. My favorite time to read is _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix D

Name_____ _____

FREE-TIME ACTIVITY CHOICES

Number these things in the order in which you would choose to do them. Number 1 would be your favorite thing to do. Number 5 would be your least favorite.

_____Playing with friends

_____Reading

_____Sports teams / clubs / music lessons

_____Video games

_____Watching T.V.

Appendix E

Home Reading Survey

Please answer the following questions about yourself and your home as accurately as possible. Remember, all surveys are CONFIDENTIAL and structured to provide data for an action research project. You need not include your name.

1. Do you read aloud to your child? _____yes _____no
   If so, how often?
   _____1-2 times a week
   _____3-5 times a week
   _____6 or more times a week

2. My child sees me reading the following materials: (Check all that apply)
   _____newspapers _____magazines _____books
   _____children's books _____other

3. How many children's books are in your home?
   _____less than 10 books _____10-20 books
   _____more than 20 books

4. Which of the following are in your home? (Check all that apply)
   _____telephone _____stereo _____VCR
   _____television _____video game _____computer

5. My child has a library card. _____yes _____no

6. My child likes to receive books as gifts. _____yes _____no

7. My child likes to be read to. _____yes _____no

8. My child would rather watch TV than read. _____yes _____no

9. My child asks to go to the library. _____yes _____no

Appendix E continued

At Home Activities

On average, my child...

* Watches TV _____ minutes a day
* Gets physical exercise _____ minutes a day
* Plays video computer games _____ minutes a day
* Reads _____ minutes a day
* Participates in an organized activity _____ minutes a day
  (These include sports teams, music lessons, scouts, etc.)

As a parent, do you feel that children engage in enough recreational reading?_____ Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

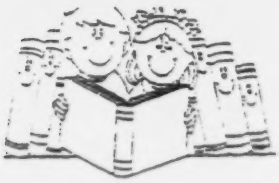
Thank you for your cooperation.

Appendix F

Collective ERAS Survey Response

	Excited		Happy		Grumpy		Upset	
ERAS Questions	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999	Sept. 1998	Jan. 1999
1. How do you feel when you read a book on a rainy day?	19	43	41	35	31	13	15	13
2. How do you feel when you read a book in school during free time?	42	63	34	31	25	14	6	9
3. How do you feel about reading for fun at home?	35	49	39	31	16	12	14	12
4. How do you feel about getting a book for a present?	55	69	29	34	11	6	10	5
5. How do you feel about spending free time reading?	31	42	39	33	24	14	16	15
6. How do you feel about starting a new book?	57	73	36	24	6	5	6	2
7. How do you feel about reading during vacation?	27	26	19	27	25	20	35	31
8. How do you feel about reading instead of playing?	23	16	12	27	17	21	57	40
9. How do you feel about going to a bookstore?	59	83	34	17	12	4	2	0
10. How do you feel about reading different kinds of books?	47	64	32	33	24	6	4	1

Appendix G



September, 1998

Dear Parents,

This year your child will be participating in a motivational adventure. As a participant in a Saint Xavier University Masters Program, I will be working on an action research project encouraging children's recreational reading. In order to develop an interest in reading, your child will be involved in activities which include story time, silent reading, and various reading incentive programs.

Part of the data collecting process will include occasional surveys for your child to complete in class. In addition, a parent questionnaire will be sent home for you to fill out. All information I gather will be kept confidential and will not affect your student's grades.

Please indicate on the form below that you are aware and approve of your child's participation in this project. Please return this form to school by _____. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

==========

I, the parent/legal guardian of the student named below, acknowledge that (name of teacher) has explained to me the need for this research and offered to answer any questions I may have about the nature of my child's participation. I freely and voluntarily consent to my child's participation in this study. I understand all information gathered during the Encouraging Recreational Reading project will be completely confidential.

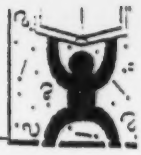
_____
Name of Student Participant

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian Date

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix H

_____'s Book Log



Title_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

Title_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

Title_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

Title_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

Title_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix I

_____'s Book Log

Title_____ Author_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

Title_____ Author_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

Title_____ Author_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

Title_____ Author_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

Why or why not?_____

_____

Title_____ Author_____

Did you like this book? yes no (circle one)

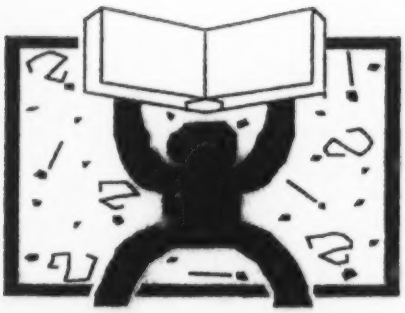
Why or why not?_____

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix J

READING AT HOME



Reading Tips for Working With Your Child

•Use games, ideas and activities in an informal way.

Try not to run a school at home, but rather encourage activities your child enjoys, or needs practice with.

•Watch the attention span of your child. Try to know when enough is enough. *One day it may be 5 minutes and another day 45 minutes.*

•Be patient when working with your child.

Reading is a difficult task, and many repetitions are often need to learn a particular skill.

•Make sure your child feels successful. Try to end activities on a positive note.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Suggestions to Help Motivate your Child to Read

•Set aside a certain time every night for <u>everyone</u> to read.
Your child needs to see a role model at home to connect a value to reading.

•Have a variety of reading materials available (books, magazines, comics, etc.).

•Turn off the TV!!!
Help your child select a few, appropriate television shows to watch each week. You will be amazed at how much extra free time there is when TV time is reduced.

•If your child likes a particular TV show or subject, read stories that relate.
(Ex. Before watching "Arthur", read an Arthur book, or after watching an episode of "Wishbone", read the actual story he portrayed that day.)

•Listen to your child read, and encourage them to show off their skills to relatives and friends.

•Have a special reading lamp for bed, and allow your child to stay up an extra 15 minutes if they choose to read.
Most children will do anything to stay up an extra few minutes. And some stores even sell light bulbs that shut off automatically after a specific amount of time so there will be no arguments about when it is time to stop reading and sleep.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

•Keep reference materials in reach. Look up things your child wants to know about.

Read difficult information to him/her. Talk about a variety of topics from your everyday life to stimulate interests. (Ex. "I wonder how far away the moon is?" or "Why do you think we should drink milk instead of pop?")

•Help your child get a library card of his/her own, and give him/her a special place to keep it.

A small purse or wallet for safe keeping will make the card seem special and important, and it may even encourage responsibility and organization.

•Read a joke or interesting news item to your child.

This may stimulate your child to share or read something with you.

Encourage your child to help plan a family trip or outing.

Whether it is to the grocery store or to Florida, road maps and brochures can be examined before you go. During the trip, encourage your child to be a good observer, and after the trip discuss what took place. Listen to your child. Varied experiences help build a background for reading.

Encourage hobbies, such as, model making, cooking, and gardening.

These require planning ahead, following directions, and reading package information.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Read aloud versus read alone

Do you read to your child, or should your child be doing the reading?

BOTH!

Children who can read fluently on their own should, of course, be encouraged to do so. Those children who are still learning to decode words and sentences, and need help reading a story should also be encouraged to read aloud (practice make perfect). All children, however, benefit from hearing stories read aloud to them.

Research shows that we can learn new vocabulary, generate new ideas, and increase our knowledge of the world around us by hearing language at a greater level than which we can ourselves read. This means, if a child can read at a second grade level it is still important to read to him/her, but at a level higher than second grade to challenge and motivate thinking.

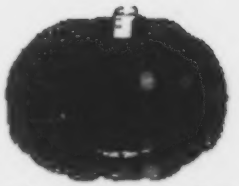
Happy Reading!

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

October 1998

Please write student's name and the titles of all books read on each pumpkin.



Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
				1	1st Pumpkin Due 2	3
4	5	6	7	2nd Pumpkin Due 8	9 No School	10
11	12	13	14	15	3rd Pumpkin Due. 16	17
18	19	20	21	22	4th Pumpkin Due. 23	24
25	26	27	28	5th Pumpkin Due 29	½ day 30 Halloween Party	31

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix L

September 1998

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

Monthly Reading and Activity Homework

Set aside time each evening for school related homework activities. Spend at least 15 minutes reading each night and choose an activity from the reverse side. Parents should initial the box on this calendar for each night your child has read and do the same on the back for activities done at home. You may also like to mark in each box how many minutes are spent reading.

Homework like this will come home each month. Choose a place in your home that it is kept so that it does not get lost, such as, the refrigerator, your child's room, or in his/her pocket folder. It is due on either the last school day of the month or the first school day of the next month.

Number of nights spent reading: _____

Total minutes/hours reading this month (optional) _____

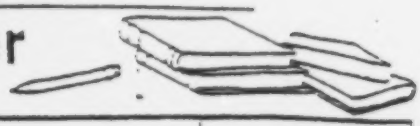
Number of activities completed on the back: _____

Parent signature: _____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Name _____

September



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Write a story about your family. ☐	Count from 1 to 100. ☐	Name things that begin with br, fr, dr, tr, gr. ☐	Visit a library. Check out three books. ☐	Tell someone what your school looks like. ☐
Put your hands on your hips. Bend to the right 10 times and to the left 10 times. ☐	Practice the basic addition facts to 10. ☐	Look at a calendar. Read the names of the months. ☐	Draw a picture of an apple that has been cut in half. ☐	Write your address and birth date three times. ☐
Put three different kinds of fruits in a bowl of water. See if any will float. ☐	Read or listen to a story. ☐	Fill in the blanks to make words. ___ at ___ un ___ ad ___ it ☐	Write a story about your best friend. ☐	Write the numbers from 1 to 50. ☐
Tell someone five words that rhyme with hat. ☐	Write the name of the city and state in which you live. ☐	Write and solve: 2 + 8 = 6 + 2 = 5 + 4 = 6 + 4 = 3 + 6 = 7 + 1 = ☐	Sing a song you learned in school. ☐	Have someone read you a story. ☐
Visit a library. Check out three books. ☐	Draw a picture of the place where you live. ☐	Write the number words from zero to ten. ☐	Copy. Write the missing numbers. 11, 12, __, 14, __ 13, 14, __, __, 17 12, __, 14, __ 17, 18, __, 20 ☐	Tell someone your three favorite fruits. ☐

Choose at least three activities each week for your child to do as homework.
Check the square when an activity has been completed.
Please sign this sheet and return it to the teacher at the end of the month.

_____
Parent's signature

© Frank Schaffer Publications, Inc.

58

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix M

Dear Parents,

Beginning in September, I will be sending home a reading calendar at the beginning of each month. I would like the children to use these calendars to keep track of their daily reading at home. The goal of this plan is for your child to read, or be read to, for 20 minutes per day. For each day that your child meets this goal, please initial the box for that day on the calendar.

At the end of the month, your child should return the calendar to me at school and those who have read consistently throughout the month will be rewarded with a small treat.

I will be sending a calendar home each month. The children can use their 20 minutes to read computer books which will enable them to earn points and meet their Book-It goal and earn their pizza certificate when that program begins in October. In other words, the twenty minutes they spend reading each day will help them to not only become better readers, but will enable them to achieve several goals simultaneously.

Thank you for your help in encouraging the children to become daily readers.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Pedersen

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Appendix N

NAME: _____ # _____ TOTAL TIME: HOURS MINS.

Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

I PROMISE THAT THE INFORMATION ON THIS CHART IS TRUE.

SIGNED: _____ / _____

STUDENT SIGNATURE DATE

_____ / _____

PARENT SIGNATURE DATE

Due: Oct. 1, 1998

SEPTEMBE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

READING CHART FOR_____#

READING CHART CRITERIA:

1. NO T.V. WHICE READING
2. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR TIME DAICY! (MUST READ 30 MINS. PER DAY FOR 24 DAYS.)
3. TOTAC YOUR READING TIME BEFORE TURNING IN THE CACENDAR.
4. THE CHART MUST BE:
   - DATED
   - SIGNED BY YOU
   - SIGNED BY YOUR PARENT

CONSEQUENCES:

+ BECOME A BETTER READER.
+ 1 STAR FOR EACH DAY THAT YOU READ.
+ 5 STARS FOR TURNING IT IN ON TIME.
+ THOSE CHARTS TURNED IN ON TIME ARE INCLUDED IN A DRAWING FOR A FREE BOOK ORDER BOOK ($2.00 VALUE). 1 BOY AND1 GIRL ARE CHOSEN EACH MONTH.
- NAME ON THE BOARD IF LATE
- ACADEMIC NOTICE IF INCOMPLETE OR IF 2 DAYS LATE.
- LOWER READING GRADE BY .5 OF A GRADE FOR NOT COMPLETING THIS REQUIREMENT.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE